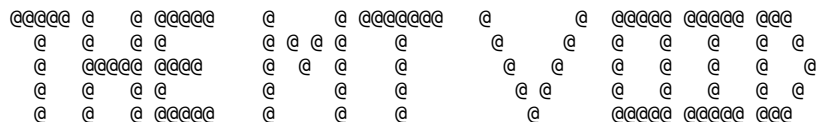


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Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
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Films and Novelizations and Films and ... (comments by Mark R. Leeper):

Last week Gary McGath suggested that since the film MOONRAKER was not a faithful adaptation of Ian Fleming's novel, and so a novelization had been written, therefore someone should film that novelization, and then write a novelization of *that* film. This is not unlike what happened with the "Living Dead" films, as I wrote back in 1988 in my review of RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD II:

1. And now let us speak of the generations of the Living Dead. Now Richard Matheson was mindful of the popularity of vampires that stretcheth back to Dracula and yes, even unto Varney. And he said, "I shall make me a modern vampire story." And he took unto himself a typewriter and there was born a writing called *I AM LEGEND*. And the fans looked upon *I AM LEGEND* and they dubbed it pretty good.
2. Now *I AM LEGEND* begat three films in degrees that varieth. And their names are *INVISIBLE INVADERS*, *THE LAST MAN ON EARTH*, and *THE OMEGA MAN*. The two younger admitted their parentage, but not the oldest. The two older were meager of budget, but not the youngest. But it was the middle one, *THE LAST MAN ON EARTH*, than became the father of generations. It starred Vincent Price and was made in the distant land of Italy.
3. And it came to pass that in the land of Pittsburgh there dwelt a lowly maker of television commercials. And his name was George Romero. And Romero looked upon *THE LAST MAN ON EARTH* and sayeth unto himself, "Now there is how to make a horror movie for few pieces of silver." And he spake unto John Russo, saying, "Write me a script." And in the fullness of time there was *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*.
4. But *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* was poor of prospect and none had heard of it and fewer cared. And it played only at theaters with big screens and no walls.
5. And Roger Ebert looked upon it and his eye was offended. And he took unto himself a typewriter and spake unto legions of his

anger, a very grievous error. And the *READERS' DIGEST* was among the legions who heard his lamentations and repeated his words unto hosts. And the hosts repeated the words unto multitudes.

6. And *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* prospered. And John Russo took unto himself a typewriter and wrote the novel of the film.

7. And in the fullness of time George Romero saw that there were multitudes who were mindful of *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* and he made *Dawn of the Dead*. And in the land of Italy *DAWN OF THE DEAD* was known by the name of *ZOMBIE* and multitudes had audience with it.

8. And Lucio Fulci said, "Here is how to make a film for not many pieces of silver but which will call forth legions." And he made *ZOMBIE II*. And in the land of America there had been no *ZOMBIE I*, so there *ZOMBIE II* was called *ZOMBIE*. And in the lands of Italy and America there were legions of filmmakers who looked upon the prosperity. And they had envy of audiences of multitudes and of the smallness of the investment. And many made films like unto what they had seen.

9. And John Russo looked upon the storm and lo he was wonderly wroth. Had he not written the writing of *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*? And the courts said, yes, he did. And lo, did this not mean he could also make sequels? But Romero said no, he knew whereof he wanted the series to go. But the courts spake unto Romero, saying "Give unto Russo equal right." And he did.

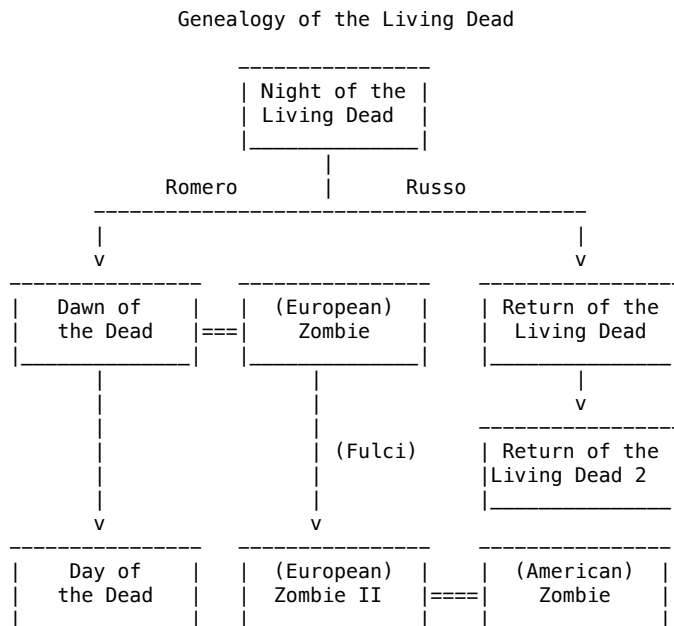
10. And John Russo took unto himself a typewriter and wrote a book called *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*. And in the fullness of time he made him a film called *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*, though it were not in the likeness of the book.

11. And George Romero made a third "Living Dead" film, *DAY OF THE DEAD*. And it was released in a short span of days from *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*. And audiences looked upon *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD* and many were well pleased. But when audiences looked upon George Romero's *DAY OF THE DEAD*, many said that his day was done.

12. And John Russo was well used to writing novels from "Living Dead" films. And, yea, it came to pass that he wrote a novel of the film *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD* and called it *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD*. And some fans and librarians were wonderly wroth and spake in anger, saying, "One author cannot write two entirely different novels and give them but one title. For lo, many libraries are geared to the principle that if two novels have but one author they will have different titles. And if two novels have but one title they will have different authors." But John Russo turned his face from these people. And, in truth, few libraries had either book.

13. And it came to pass that *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD* was popular unto its generation and it begat *RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD II*.

[The following chart is best read with a fixed-width font.]



[-mrl]

Robby the Robot (letter of comment by R. Looney):

In response to [comments on Robby the Robot](#) in the 09/10/21 issue of the MT VOID, R. Looney writes:

Speaking of Robby, last time I was in Vegas I noticed one of these photos, framed and on a wall:

<https://www.vintag.es/2020/07/robby-the-robot-in-las-vegas-1956.html>

[-rl]

Mark responds:

I am surprised there were no comments about the mixed relationship they would have. [-mrl]

FORBIDDEN PLANET (letter of comment by Kip Williams):

In response to [Dorothy J. Heydt's comments on the novelization of FORBIDDEN PLANET](#) in the 09/24/21 issue of the MT VOID, Kip Williams writes:

The novelization isn't the only oddly recreated bit of FORBIDDEN PLANET. When we lived in Houston around 1984, the comic shop I went to had a stack of FORBIDDEN PLANET 45s. Since the movie had no music track, these actually were "inspired by" the movie. Fittingly, the store was named Third Planet.

Keeping to my lifelong tradition of letting things like that get away without picking one up and learning more, I let it get away without picking one up and learning more. [-kw]

YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE (letter of comment by Paul Dormer):

In response to [John Hertz's comments on YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE](#) in the 09/24/21 issue of the MT VOID, Paul Dormer writes:

Reminds me of an exchange reported in a paper many years ago. When examining some report in committee, the Labour MP Ian Mikardo pointed out that the word "only" was in the wrong place. A Tory on the committee (probably went to Eton and Oxford or Cambridge) suggest he should also take Ben Jonson to task for "Drink to me only with thine eyes."

Mikardo (left school at an early age) pointed out that Jonson meant drink to me with thine eyes and not with a pint of beer. Drink only to me would mean drink to me and not the barmaid at the Dog and Duck. [-pd]

Evelyn writes:

For those interested in yet more comments on Ian Fleming, see "On Ian Fleming as Craftsman" recently published at <https://kirkcenter.org/essays/on-ian-fleming-as-craftsman/>. [-ecl]

Stanislav Yevgrafovich Petrov (letters of comment by Gary McGath, Tim Merrigan, Dorothy J. Heydt, Radovan Garabik, and Peter Trei):

In response to [Evelyn's comments on Stanislav Yevgrafovich Petrov](#) in the 09/24/21 issue of the MT VOID, Gary McGath writes:

The notification Petrov got said there were five missiles. Even with that number, the lack of any additional ones made him suspicious. I have a song about him:

<http://www.mcgath.com/songs/StanislavPetrov.pdf>

[-gmg]

Tim Merrigan adds:

For which, he got both a reprimanded from his superiors in the Kremlin, and a "Hero of the Soviet Union" medal (the highest medal awarded in the Soviet Union). [-tm]

Dorothy J. Heydt observes:

Hey, it beat what Napoleon said to one of his marshals: "For winning the battle, I'm giving you the Croix de Guerre. For disobeying orders, I'm going to have you shot." [-djh]

Gary replies:

There's a similar bit in [Victor] Hugo's novel NINETY-THREE. A man carelessly lets a cannon get loose on the deck of a ship, where it rolls around wrecking stuff and killing people. (After reading that, I understood where "loose cannon" comes from.) He then restrains it at great personal risk. The Marquis de Lantenac gives him a high commendation and then has him executed.

Petrov got the Dresden Prize and the Future of Life Award, the latter posthumously, but I can't find any reference to his getting an award from the Soviet Union. [-gmg]

Radovan Garabik adds:

More importantly, the Russian language wikipedia (known for its thoroughness and reliability, yeah, right) does not mention any USSR medals, and it has a section on his awards. [-rg]

Tim writes:

One of the episodes of "Mysteries at the Museum" covered his medal, I think it was at an American Museum, and explained why he got it, and why it was on display in an American museum. [-tm]

Gary McGath opines (hey, I'm running out of "said-isms!):

I once watched a few episodes of "Mysteries at the Museum." As reliable sources of information go, it's somewhere between the National Enquirer and Q. [-gmg]

Peter Trei replies to Gary re the Marquis de Lantenac:

I'm reminded of Titus Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus, a 4th Century B.C. Roman General, who executed his own adult son for disobeying military orders: https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titus_Manlius_Imperiosus_Torquatus

[-pt]

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

I finally got--and read--THE RELENTLESS MOON by Mary Robinette Kowal (Tor, ISBN 978-1-250-23696-8). This is the third novel in the "Lady Astronaut" series (there is also a novella). I read the first two novels when they came out, three years ago. Maybe it's my age, but at this point, I don't remember a lot from them. So while THE RELENTLESS MOON is a well-written novel in the mode of classic science fiction, I didn't get as much out of it as I probably would have had there not been a three-year gap. In particular, I didn't remember the relationships among all the people, or even their ethnicities. And therein lies a major flaw of a series. I still recommend the book, but you need to have read and remembered the first two books.

(And what does "relentless moon" mean? How can a moon be relentless? "Relentless" implies a certain intentionality, a conscious effort towards an end. Unless we are going to discover that the moon is alive, I don't see how it can be relentless.)

I am also slogging my way through the Hugo finalists. Okay, "slogging" is probably unfair--many of the finalists are quite good. But even as I see the list of what remains for me to read, I find myself thinking about W. Somerset Maugham's *CAKES AND ALE*, started and sitting on my shelf waiting for me to continue. It is delightful and witty and enjoyable, and frankly more enticing than most of the science fiction waiting for me.

Some examples of Maugham's writing:

"The wise always use a number of ready-made phrases (at the moment I write 'nobody's business' is the most common), popular adjectives (like 'divine' or 'shy-making'), verbs that you only know the meaning of if you live in the right set (like "dunch"), which give ease and a homely sparkle to small talk and avoid the necessity of thought. The Americans, who are the most efficient people on the earth, have carried this device to such a height of perfection and have invented so wide a range of pithy and hackneyed phrases that they can carry on an amusing and animated conversation without giving a moment's reflection to what they are saying and so leave their minds free to consider the more important matters of big business and fornication."

"A man who is a politician at forty is a statesman at three score and ten. It is at this age, when he would be too old to be a clerk or a gardener or a police-court magistrate, that he is ripe to govern a country."

"After mature consideration I have come to the conclusion that the real reason for the universal applause that comforts the declining years of the author who exceeds the common span of man is that intelligent people after the age of thirty read nothing at all. As they grow older the books they read in their youth are lit with its glamour and with every year that passes they ascribe greater merit to the author that wrote them."

[The above assumes they don't re-read them and discover the suck fairy--a creature who comes to old favorite books or other media that one has not revisited in years, takes away everything in them that one loved, and makes them suck--has been at work.]

[After noting that Evelyn Waugh disparages the first person narrative] "All the same I can find one reason why certain novelists, such as Defoe, Sterne, Thackeray, Dickens, Emily Bronte, and Proust, well known in their day but now doubtless forgotten, have used the method that Mr. Evelyn Waugh reprehends."

"It is strange (and instructive) to read now the book that created such a sensation; there is not a word that could bring a blush to the cheek of the most guileless, not an episode that could cause the novel reader of the present day to turn a hair."

[Sort of like seeing what films got "A" certificates in Britain decades ago, or even "X" ratings here.]

"And I reflected also that there is no example in literary history of an author committing suicide while engaged on the composition of a literary work. Whatever his tribulations, he is unwilling to leave to posterity an uncompleted opus."

"She never had anything but praise for the new Mrs. Drifffield; she was not exactly pretty, she said, but she had a very nice face; of course she wasn't quite, quite a lady, but Edward would only have been uncomfortable with anyone too grand. She was just the sort of

wife for him. I think it may be not unjustly said that Mrs. Barton Trafford fairly ran over with the milk of human kindness, but all the same I have an inkling that if ever the milk of human kindness was charged with vitriol, here was a case in point."

And for those who visit authors' home to see where they sat, and wrote, and ate, Maugham has this to say: "He wouldn't let her change a thing and she had to go to work with the greatest care; she says she simply couldn't have lived in it and she was determined to have things right, so she had to change things one by one so that he didn't pay any attention. She told me the hardest job she had was with his writing desk. I don't know whether you've noticed the one there is in his study now. It's a very good period piece; I wouldn't mind having it myself. Well, he had a horrible American roll-top desk. He'd had it for years and he'd written a dozen books on it and he simply wouldn't part with it, he had no feeling for things like that; he just happened to be attached to it because he'd had it so long. You must get Amy to tell you the story how she managed to get rid of it in the end."

He also has one character quoting Dickens but implying it was his own words: "What I always say to my boys is, if you've got a pound and you spend nineteen and six you're a rich man, but if you spend twenty shillings and sixpence you're a pauper. Look after the pence, young fellow, and the pounds'll look after themselves."

[-ecl]

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Quote of the Week:

One man's folly is another man's wife.
--Helen Rowland

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